

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, December 5, 1997

CONTACT: Bill Newsome, Consumer & Environmental Protection Unit, 533-5500; or Lauri Twomey, Special Assistant for Media Relations, 235-5725; Pager: 232-2237, PIN #6273

'Tis The Season to be Wary--of Holiday Charity Rip-offs and Frauds

Holidays bring out the best in most people, and unfortunately the worst in some. For that reason, City Attorney Casey Gwinn cautions San Diegans to be especially careful to avoid being ripped-off or defrauded this holiday season.

"Complaints concerning questionable charitable solicitations increase during this time of year," says Gwinn," says Gwinn. San Diegans should watch out for charitable solicitations via telephone calls from persons claiming to represent local hospitals, police or sheriff's departments, and other familiar organizations. "You may want to call the organization the caller claims to represent to verify their fund-raising efforts, Gwinn suggests.

Beware of any telephone solicitor who offers to pick up your donation at your home or office, as well as those solicitors who ask you to make checks out to names other than the familiar organization they claim to represent.

For more information about a particular charity, call the California Attorney General's Office, Registry of Charitable Trusts, at (916) 445-2021.

San Diego residents who suspect that they've been solicited by a questionable fund-raising operation should call the City Attorney's Consumer & Environmental Helpline at (619) 533-5600.

#